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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 4th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 5 June 2006, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Hunte ..... (Saint Lucia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

1. **The Chairman** informed the Committee that the delegation of Peru had expressed the wish to participate as an Observer during the Committee's current session. He took it that the Committee wished to accede to the request.

2. *It was so decided.*

Adoption of the agenda

3. *The agenda was adopted.*

Regional Seminar on Decolonization

4. **The Chairman** recalled that the Committee had been scheduled to hold the Regional Seminar on Decolonization in Timor-Leste as part of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, but had been unable to do so, owing to circumstances beyond its control.

5. The Week of Solidarity had been established by the General Assembly in resolution 2911 (XXVII), and began on 25 May of each year, African Liberation Day. Although the United Nations had become truly universal, representing countries of all sizes, it was important to maintain the spirit of solidarity that would help all the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve full self-government. In that context, the work of the Committee, and of the wider United Nations system, was still unfinished and must continue until the last vestiges of colonialism became history.

Requests for hearing

6. **The Chairman** drew attention to aides-mémoires 05/06 and 06/06, which contained requests for hearing on the questions of Gibraltar and the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), respectively. He took it that the Committee wished to accede to those requests.

7. *It was so decided.*

8. **The Chairman** drew attention to aides-mémoires 07/06 and 03/06, which contained requests for hearing on the questions of Western Sahara and Puerto Rico. He took it that the Committee wished to accede to those requests.

9. *It was so decided.*

Dissemination of information on decolonization
(A/AC.109/2006/18 and A/AC.109/2006/L.4)

10. **Mr. Fawzi** (Officer-in-Charge, Department of Public Information), introducing the report of the Department of Public Information on the dissemination of information on decolonization (A/AC.109/2006/18), said that the Department's activities pertaining to decolonization could be broadly characterized as coverage and outreach. With respect to coverage, the Department's activities had focused on the work of the General Assembly, particularly the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee. The Department had issued 33 press releases on relevant meetings held during the reporting period. In addition, working closely with the Department of Political Affairs and the Special Committee, it had issued press releases about the Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization held in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in May 2005, the visiting mission to Bermuda in 2005, and the visiting mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands in 2006. All press releases had been posted on the United Nations website.

11. United Nations Radio had broadcast news stories on the referendum in Tokelau in February 2006 and had also covered the Caribbean Regional Seminar in 2005. It also regularly covered issues concerning Western Sahara. The Arabic Radio Unit in particular had reported on the issue every time it had been discussed in the Security Council. The Department's quarterly magazine, UN Chronicle, had covered the issue of decolonization, and United Nations activities regarding decolonization during the reporting period would be described in the fifty-eighth, fifty-ninth and sixtieth volumes of the United Nations Yearbook.

12. The Department's outreach activities had been conducted through the media, the Internet, the network of United Nations Information Centres and Services, and other outlets. The Department had undertaken intensive outreach to promote the significance of the referendum in Tokelau on free association with New Zealand in February 2006. The News Centre, which was one of the most frequently visited pages on the United Nations website, and United Nations Radio had carried news throughout the referendum process, and the United Nations internal online staff site had also highlighted the referendum with text and photographs. Stories relating to decolonization had also been distributed through the English and French language e-mail news service to over 40,000 subscribers

worldwide, and had been picked up by an increasing number of external websites. The network of United Nations Information Centres and Services had played a critical role in disseminating information on the work of the United Nations in the area of decolonization.

13. The General Assembly, in resolution 60/112, had requested the Department to prepare an information leaflet on assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories and to disseminate it widely to them. The Department had sent out a request for contributions to all relevant funds and programmes, but had received only a limited number of responses thus far. It would continue to seek contributions to the leaflet, and widely disseminate it in those Territories through all means available.

14. The Department had designed the decolonization website and made it operational in 2001. The website had proven to be a very useful tool in disseminating information on the work of the United Nations on decolonization. Management of the website had since been transferred to the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, which had made further improvements to its content. The Department of Public Information had been utilizing its News Centre website to publicize the latest developments relating to decolonization, and had been working with the Decolonization Unit on ways to improve further the design of the decolonization website.

15. **Ms. Gerlach** (Chief, Decolonization Unit, Department of Political Affairs) said that during the period under review the Department of Political Affairs had continued, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, to do its utmost to disseminate information about the decolonization process in order to encourage steps towards self-determination in the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories.

16. In preparing working papers for the Committee, the Department collected information on the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories from many sources. It sought the cooperation of the administering Powers in providing information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations, monitored numerous media and Internet sites, and gathered information from the participants at the regional seminars conducted by the Committee, during visiting missions, and from petitioners participating in meetings of the Committee and in hearings of the Fourth Committee. Such occasions also provided the Department with an opportunity to disseminate information about the decolonization mandate of the United Nations, including the work of the Committee, the options available to the Territories with respect to their future status, and assistance programmes offered by United Nations programmes and the specialized agencies.

17. As called for in General Assembly resolution 60/112, the Department's Decolonization Unit was assisting the Department of Public Information in the production of a brochure on the different kinds of United Nations assistance available. The Department also continued to provide up-to-date information to the Public Inquiries Unit and the Guided Tour Unit on decolonizations matters.

18. Despite those activities, disseminating information on the Organization's decolonization mandate remained a challenge. The decolonization website, for which the Department had taken over responsibility in 2004, represented a concrete effort to remedy that situation. Over the coming months the Department would work with the Department of Public Information to make the website more user-friendly.

19. **The Chairman** drew attention to the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information at the opening of the twenty-eighth session of the Committee on Information, held on 24 April 2006, in which the Under-Secretary-General had referred to the "triumphant dismantling of colonialism". In that regard, he wished to recall that there still remained 16 Non-Self-Governing Territories on the United Nations list which had not experienced that "triumphant dismantling" and that the Committee, and the General Assembly, remained very much seized of the matter. The effective implementation of resolutions on dissemination of information on decolonization would serve to advance the United Nations towards the day when such a triumph would be experienced by those 16 Territories.

20. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that there appeared to be two United Nations websites on decolonization, one of which required updating. He wondered why that was the case, as the situation was confusing to users.

21. **Ms. Gerlach** (Department of Political Affairs) said she was surprised to hear that there were two websites. If it transpired that there was a residual website of the Department of Public Information

showing outdated information, she would ensure that it was deleted from the United Nations website.

22. **The Chairman** said that the Committee would look into the issue of the information provided on the website in an effort to reduce the workload of the Decolonization Unit while ensuring that the relevant information was available. The goal was to make available all the information necessary to provide an informed opinion of the work carried out by the United Nations on decolonization.

23. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) asked why the Committee had not considered aide-memoire 04/06 relating to the United States Virgin Islands. With respect to draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.4, he said that certain administering Powers often criticized the Committee and claimed that its work had become redundant; the Committee should therefore give thorough consideration to any new developments relating to draft resolutions before taking action on them.

24. **The Chairman** said that, at the outset of the second half of the second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the Committee's work was far from redundant. In his view, the Committee was now at the most difficult stage of its work, as the 16 remaining cases were the most challenging. He would have no problem deferring consideration of the draft resolution to give the Committee more time to consider the report, if other members of the Committee so desired.

25. **Mr. Cherniavsky** (Secretary of the Committee) said that aide-memoire 04/06 would be taken up under other matters, as it was not so much a request for hearing as a request for the financial assistance.

26. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) said that it had not been his intention to delay adoption of the report. He had simply wanted to point out that his delegation had not had time to look at it and would therefore be making comments at a future meeting. If the rest of the Committee wished to adopt the report, his delegation would have no objection.

27. As for his other comments, it was certainly not his delegation's view that the Committee was redundant. Rather, the Committee should not give others reason to use that argument. One way would be to ensure that issues were discussed thoroughly before draft resolutions were issued and adopted.

28. **The Chairman** said that he took it that the Committee wished to defer action on draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.4.

29. *It was so decided.*

Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (A/61/70 and A/AC.109/2006/L.5)

30. **The Chairman** drew attention to the report of the Secretary-General (A/61/70), which contained information provided by the administering Powers under Article 73 *e* of the Charter, and to draft resolution A/AC.109/2006/L.5.

31. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), referring to paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, proposed inserting the word "regularly" after the words "continue to transmit" in the second line, as such wording would be more in keeping with the Charter.

32. **Mr. Diarra** (Mali) noted a discrepancy between paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report and paragraph 2 of the draft resolution. The former referred to information on geography, history and population, economic, social and educational conditions and, in some cases, constitutional matters. The latter, meanwhile, referred only to information on political and constitutional developments in the Territories concerned, including the constitution, legislative act or executive order providing for the government of the Territory and the constitutional relationship of the Territory to the administering Power.

33. **Mr. Cherniavsky** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the parameters defining the information to be submitted by the administering Powers had been established in the Charter and in various resolutions of the General Assembly. Paragraph 3 of the Secretary-General's report spelled out in full the information listed in Article 73 e of the Charter, while paragraph 2 of the draft resolution merely requested administering Powers to transmit the information contained therein. The result was the same.

34. **Mr. Maleki** (Islamic Republic of Iran), noting that paragraph 2 of the draft resolution already requested the administering Powers to transmit the information prescribed in Article 73 e of the Charter, wondered whether it was really necessary to spell out that information in full.

35. **The Chairman** said that there was no harm in spelling out the information prescribed in Article 73 *e* of the Charter. The draft resolution would therefore be revised in line with the proposal by the representative of Mali before being revisited by the Committee later that week.

36. *The meeting was suspended at 11.15 a.m. and resumed at noon.*

Question of sending visiting missions to Territories (A/AC.109/2006/19 and A/AC.109/2006/L.6)

37. **The Chairman** drew attention to the draft resolution contained in A/AC.109/2006/L.6, which had been updated to reflect new developments, in particular the mission to observe the Tokelau referendum in February 2006 and the special mission to the Turks and Caicos Islands in April 2006.

Other matters

38. **The Chairman** said that he had received a request from the representative of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands, Dr. Carlyle Corbin, to address the Committee under two items, the United States Virgin Islands and implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations. Dr. Corbin had also indicated his wish to have access to the financial assistance that was available to representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories who wished to participate in the work of the Committee in accordance with the guidelines for funding such participation. Dr. Corbin's request had been circulated to all members of the Committee as aide-memoire 04/06. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the request, with due regard for the provisions of the guidelines.

39. *It was so decided.*

40. **The Chairman** said that, owing to recent developments in Timor-Leste, the Committee had been forced to postpone the 2006 Pacific Regional Seminar, originally scheduled for 23-25 May 2006 in Dili, Timor-Leste. The Security Council was continuing to monitor the situation in Timor-Leste and Mr. Ian Martin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Timor-Leste, would be updating the Council on developments in the country shortly.

41. He wished to express the Committee's solidarity with the people of Timor-Leste and assure them of the Committee's continued support. In his view, it was important for the Committee to await the Special Representative's report before taking any decisions as to a new date and, if necessary, new location of the seminar. Nevertheless, the Committee still fully intended to conduct the seminar during 2006.

42. **Ms. Borges** (Timor-Leste) said that her delegation appreciated the Committee's decision to await the Special Representative's report before making any decisions regarding the Seminar.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.